

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 4, 2019

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
Acting Chief of Staff
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Mulvaney:

The Committees on Foreign Affairs, Intelligence, and Oversight and Reform of the United States House of Representatives (“Committees”), write jointly to request documents from the White House, and interviews with White House and other Executive Office of the President personnel, related to communications between President Donald J. Trump and President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation.

According to media reports, President Trump, on multiple occasions, appears to have taken steps to conceal details of his communications with President Putin from other administration officials, Congress, and the American people.¹ The President reportedly seized notes pertaining to at least one meeting he held with President Putin and directed at least one American interpreter not to discuss the substance of communications with President Putin with other U.S. officials.

On February 21, 2019, we wrote a joint letter to you requesting basic information about whether the President in fact destroyed records relating to his conversations with President Putin—in violation of the Presidential Records Act—or if he did not, where those records are currently located.² The White House failed to provide any response to our inquiry. As a result, we are now expanding our investigation.

These allegations, if true, raise profound counterintelligence and foreign policy concerns, especially in light of Russia’s ongoing active measures campaign to improperly influence American elections. In addition, such allegations, if true, undermine the proper functioning of government, most notably the State Department’s access to critical information germane to its

¹ *Trump Has Concealed Details of His Face-to-Face Encounters with Putin from Senior Officials in Administration*, Washington Post (Jan. 13, 2019) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/trump-has-concealed-details-of-his-face-to-face-encounters-with-putin-from-senior-officials-in-administration/2019/01/12/65f6686c-1434-11e9-b6ad-9cfd62dbb0a8_story.html).

² Letter from Chairman Elijah E. Cummings, Committee on Oversight and Reform, Chairman Eliot Engel, Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Chairman Adam B. Schiff, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, to Acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney (Feb. 21, 2019) (online at <https://oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/documents/2019-02-21.EEC%20Engel%20Schiff%20to%20Mulvaney-WH%20re%20PRA.pdf>).

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diplomatic mission and its ability to develop and execute foreign policy that advances our national interests. Finally, these allegations raise serious concerns that materials pertaining to specific communications may have been manipulated or withheld from the presidential record in direct contravention of federal laws, which require that Presidents and other officials preserve such materials.

Congress has a constitutional duty to conduct oversight over the White House to determine, among other things, (i) the impact of those communications on U.S. foreign policy, (ii) whether federal officials, including President Trump, have acted in the national interest, and (iii) whether the applicable laws, regulations, and agency procedures with respect to diplomatic communications with President Putin and other foreign leaders have been complied with and remain sufficient. As the House Committees with legislative and oversight jurisdiction over these issues, we require information regarding the following subjects:

- The substance of President Trump's communications with President Putin, including any discussion between the two individuals—during in-person encounters and phone calls—on matters that are within the Committees' jurisdiction;
- The existence and contents, if applicable, of any documents related to President Trump's communications with President Putin;
- Whether any such communications have provided a basis for reconsideration, modification, or implementation of foreign policy;
- Whether President Trump or any person(s) acting at his behest or with his knowledge sought to conceal, obscure, or otherwise misrepresent the substance of those communications to other federal officials, departments, or agencies, and/or to shield President Trump from scrutiny by Congress or law enforcement; and
- Whether President Trump, or any person(s) acting at his behest or with his knowledge, failed to create records of, or in any way destroyed, suppressed, mishandled, or otherwise withheld any federal or presidential records, contrary to federal law, including the Federal Records Act and Presidential Records Act.

Accordingly, the Committees therefore request that, by March 15, 2019, the White House produce all documents and communications, regardless of form and classification, that refer or relate to any communications between President Trump and President Putin, including in-person meetings and telephone calls, for the timeframe January 20, 2017, to present.

Specifically, we request that the White House produce complete and unredacted copies of:

1. All documents referring or related to in-person meetings, or preparation for in-person meetings, between President Donald Trump and President Vladimir Putin, whether in a bilateral or multilateral setting;
2. All documents referring or related to telephone calls, or preparation for telephone calls, between President Trump and President Putin;
3. All documents referring or related to records of any written communications between or about communications between President Trump and President Putin;
4. All documents referring or related to any guidance provided to White House or agency personnel, including concerning the Federal Records Act and/or the Presidential Records Act and the legal obligation to prepare and retain records of meetings with foreign leaders; and
5. All documents referring or related to compliance or noncompliance with federal records laws including the Federal Records Act and/or the Presidential Records Act, including any efforts to obtain and properly maintain records that relate to communications between President Trump and President Putin.

The White House is expected to produce a complete set of any and all responsive records to each of the three Committees. Both the House and the Committees are authorized and equipped to take possession and handle classified documents, whether produced in electronic or physical form. For additional instructions concerning the production of documents, please refer to the attached Document Production Protocol. Should the White House identify responsive documents that it believes to be subject to any privilege(s), such documents, as well as the rationale for the purported privilege, should be identified at the time productions are made.

In addition, the Committees request that the White House identify and make available for transcribed interviews all White House or Executive Office of the President employees, contractors, or detailees, whether current or former, with knowledge of these communications, including, but not limited to:

1. All staff, including but not limited to linguists, translators, or interpreters who participated in attended, or in any way listened in on President Trump's in-person meetings with President Putin, as well as President Trump's phone calls with President Putin;
2. Personnel who were either present at the events at which Presidents Trump and Putin communicated, or have knowledge about such communications, including:

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- a. personnel staffing or otherwise assisting at the July 7, 2017 G-20 meeting in Hamburg, Germany;
 - b. personnel staffing or otherwise assisting at the July 16, 2018 meeting in Helsinki, Finland; and
 - c. personnel who became privy to formal or informal written or oral readouts of those communications, either via other U.S. government employees or from foreign counterparts;
3. Personnel who were responsible for advising White House personnel concerning the Federal Records Act and/or the Presidential Records Act and the legal obligation to prepare and retain records of meetings with foreign leaders, and/or who were responsible for obtaining and properly maintaining such records; and
 4. Relevant personnel present at the events at which Presidents Trump and Putin communicated.

The Committees are prepared to work cooperatively with the White House to facilitate the production of documents and to schedule the requested interviews, as initial steps in conducting Congressional oversight on diplomatic communications that are central to American foreign policy and national security. Staff on all three of our Committees will jointly schedule a meeting with the White House Counsel shortly to discuss this request and ensure the scope is properly understood by the White House.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Eliot Engel
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Affairs



Adam B. Schiff
Chairman
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence



Elijah Cummings
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Reform

cc: The Honorable Michael McCaul
Ranking Member, Foreign Affairs Committee

The Honorable Devin Nunes
Ranking Member, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

The Honorable Jim Jordan
Ranking Member, Committee on Oversight and Reform